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Thank you.

I know that most of you don't know me and many of you might have some questions ... and even doubts and suspicions... about me. So let me get right to the point. My name is Darth Vader.

Seriously, you need to know something about me. I have five values that guide me: **Integrity, Respect, Accountability, Inclusion or acceptance and Optimism.**

I believe I was selected because of my broad knowledge and demonstrated leadership skill- in dental practice, in public health and higher education, where I spent over 25 years, and the dental benefits industry where I was asked by my peers on the Board of Directors, to lead a billion dollar company for 6 years, and above all else, I believe I was selected because of my enthusiastic devotion to my profession. I love being a dentist first and foremost.

As a middle child of seven, as a high school and college athlete, and as the child of a father who graduated from Tufts Dental School in 1947, I learned early that superb negotiation skills, team work and a will to make people feel good about themselves achieved success which was defined by the respect of others. I feel like I have been training my whole life for this job.

So how have my first few months on the job gone? Has it been a challenge? I walked into a culture plagued by uncertainty, unpredictability and a lack of trust. Re affirming integrity and respect was job #1. Immediately upon my arrival, I knew the financial hemorrhage at ADAidm had to be stopped and that the reputation of ADA had to be protected. Our member customers had to be taken care of. Shutting down a troubled company is not what I had in mind during my first six weeks, and Dr. Findley kept checking to see if I was still at my desk or headed back to Boston on the first flight available those first few difficult weeks. I firmly believe in never wasting a perfectly good crisis to prove our worth.

My job is to lead and inspire this talented staff and empower your vision of the future, not create one of my own. Your ADA team understands this. The staff's intelligence, devotion and work ethic is a remarkable thing to behold and a joy for any executive director, especially this brand new one.

We **respect** you, and that means we listen to you. Many associations like the American Medical Association are cutting budgets and staff to the bone. In tough economic times, we cut expenses, not people, not programs and not critical services that matter to our members. At the ADA- thanks to broad based, shared sacrifice, we've avoided both a dues increase and draconian service and program cuts that would have devalued your membership.

Other associations are seeing substantial membership loss this year ... so far, we're holding our own, growing the ranks of active members and working hard to earn the confidence and praise of every American dentist. We are committed to WOW levels of service and the creation of wild raving fans.

I am accountable to you for results. It has been a challenging first few months on the job – and a very challenging year for the ADA. Together we are meeting the challenge, and planning for our future with a reinvigorated strategic planning process, starting with you, the HOD, and ending with a strategic operating plan for 2011 including performance metrics, and for 2010 that the Board can oversee and that the Strategic Planning Committee can monitor.

We will grow non-dues revenue, contain expenses, operate efficiently and effectively. If we are to attract new members and retain existing members, we must hold the line on member dues and avoid cutting high value programs and services. In fact we must be better stewards of your money by looking critically at what programs and services provide the most value, in a cost effective manner. Intelligent abandonment, a term coined by Peter Drucker, means we must learn to walk away from programs that have lost their purpose and their value. There is simply not enough money to be everything to everyone forever. Tough choices must be made, and that is why it is critically important to execute superb strategic planning and link the available financial resources and the budget process directly to that plan.

Fifty-five percent of the operating budget comes from non-dues revenue

sources. This is a tremendous benefit to our members; it gives us the ability to leverage every dues dollar with \$1.25 of additional support

We need to grow these non-dues revenues. But you know and I know that it can't be done capriciously driven by self-interest, ignorance or arrogance –we have certainly learned that the hard way... If those new non-dues revenues are truly going to support ADA priorities, then we have to be especially prudent how we obtain them. And to do that, we need to be sure that everyone who acts on the ADA's behalf rigorously adheres to the highest ethical standards, to best business practice, including financial reporting systems that provide clean line of sight for you, to proper due diligence in every new initiative, to disciplined budgeting and to valid ongoing market and member research. I treat your money as if it were my own. I will never lie to you, and if anyone who works for you does, they will be fired.

Integrity, Respect, Accountability: Actions speak louder than words. We the staff, commit to the highest ethical standards. We have created a Code of Ethics with 14 guiding principles that every member of the ADA staff will read and sign with pride—we encourage the Board to join in. Everyone who earns a paycheck from your dues dollars earns it honestly and with integrity— and we will be held accountable for our performance and results achieved. We are proud of our Association, and measuring our successes and evaluating our failures routinely strengthens organizational pride.

This code of ethics is in addition to new policies already in place meant to protect the ADA reputation. These policies regulate our relationships with corporate partners and vendors. I will bear ultimate responsibility not only for the promoting these policies, but holding our team accountable for them. As Harry S. Truman said—the buck stops here. I want to be known as an "iron fist in a silk glove"—constantly looking out for the best interests of this Association and not my best interest. I don't need nor seek the spotlight—you won't be seeing my photo anywhere so remember this face.

Now, the good news is this –ADA employees already understand these values ...we inform and educate our volunteers, and enable them to lead our Association. Our job is to see to it that all volunteers in leadership positions have the knowledge required to properly exercise the Duty of Care in addition to their Fiduciary Duty, their Duty of Obedience to the ADA Mission, and their Duty of Loyalty to the ADA, not their own agendas.

We're off to a terrific start -- and you can see it in the ways we've added

membership value in the past year. Incredible ADA employees deserve the best leadership our volunteer leaders can provide-honest, ethical, fair, enthusiastic, confident and caring leadership. You will see “wow” service at the Annual Session, because no one matters more to an ADA employee than you, our members. If you experience anything but WOW, you come find me.

Adding value means getting back to basics such as routinely measuring satisfaction levels for the services we provide to members. It means measuring employee satisfaction. It means measuring results in every area and holding ourselves accountable. And it means taking innovative approaches to reaching out to members, finding new strategic promotional incentives and building new inroads to diverse communities.

The world we live in is changing rapidly. ADA must be a welcoming community-inclusive to all dentists, not just those who have chosen private solo practice as their career path. Reaching out to ALL our members-women dentists, emerging majority dentists, dentists who work in community health centers, in large group practices, in the academic and public health sectors. The upcoming Summit on Diversity next year will be a tremendous forum for listening and learning about becoming a truly welcoming association for all our members.

I am so proud to be a part of ADA at this time, and to see my personal value of inclusiveness or acceptance be so consistent with the spirit of the ADA. My life bears witness to the fabric of our lives being enriched through the belief that different is better-my four children come from four very different cultures and ethnicities. My husband says we look like the United Nations when we go out for dinner and I am always impressed when a wait staff tells me how much the kids look like me. Thank goodness at least one of my sons has my brains and my husband’s nose.

Optimism may be the most important value of all. We have all seen hard times throughout our lives. Vince Lombardi said, it’s not whether you get knocked down, it’s whether you get up. Today, this HOD is ADA at its best – fighting for our shared values of integrity, respect, accountability, inclusiveness and optimism, standing solidly on science, advocating for our profession and our patients’ oral health.

These are the principles you express year after year ... and the values I’m charged with defending. Remarkable Associations not only weather a crisis, they learn from it as well and find opportunity to become better,

stronger and more relevant. We begin anew, with eyes, minds and hearts focused clearly on the future, without forgetting the past, to the next 150 years. Optimism means something very special to me.

Twenty nine years ago, when I was a senior dental student at Tufts, my dad, my role model, took his own life. I could have chosen to walk away from this profession and gone back to a career in nursing, because it just seemed so hard to be reminded of my dad every minute of every day through my own practice of dentistry. I did not walk away.

I was class president, and my classmates needed me. My family needed me, and my dad's patients needed me. Now I understand that there was something important in store for me. And something important is in store for this Association. The future is bright, the problems are being solved, and your ADA team is excited about implementing your vision of a great, sustainable, relevant and welcoming professional association.

Whatever you believe of me after my remarks are finished, is up to you. As Oscar Wilde said, "the only thing worse than being talked about, is not being talked about".

The Board and you honor me by allowing me this privilege-to be your executive director-to bring my values of integrity, respect, accountability, inclusiveness and optimism and intertwine them with your values; I aim to meet and exceed your expectations of the Executive Director position.

You and I are not really so different. We laugh, we debate, we love and we hope for this profession. I will not let you, my colleagues, and my profession down-not now, not ever.

Thank you.